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REGRET.

BY FANNIE MERRILL.

Oh, fair, dead face so still, so perfect in your sleep!
Oh, fair lids drooped o'er eyes that nevermore shall weep!
Oh, perfect lips that give no answer back to tender words I say!
If I had known that this would be the end, That day!

Had known that sweetest rose-leaf mouth would never press, own, with shrinking, shy caress, With timid, maiden grace; that tender, soul-eyes would never meet Again, my own, in love and trust so full And sweet;

That glittering waves of gold-brown hair would never rest, Oh, never, never more in peace upon my breast, Those bitter words that blanched the quivering lips to gray.
The glowing cheek to snow had not been said That day.

The last farewell like that! oh, dead heart's love, so vain These tears that fell upon your peaceful face like Upon your shining hair, so vain the wild regrets that surge my soul! Could you but see me now, could you but know The whole—

The whole! ah me, too late, too late, oh, dear heart's sweet!
And I had loved you so! If, laying at your feet, My weary life could call back to white cheek and brow the rose-hued rift Of breath, how quickly would I give the one Poor gift!

Yet, dead love, if you bend beyond its shades that fall, The shades between my soul and thine, you will know all. Mayhap that, even now, you wait with pity near, To bring some silent, heaven-sent word of love and cheer; And, trusting thus, I go with chastened heart from thy Dear presence out into the weary paths that lie, Henceforth, for me alone; my guiding-star, my Love, My only earth Love, waiting now my coming, Just above.

Little Volcano, THE BOY MINER;

OR,
The Pirates of the Placers.

A ROMANCE OF LIFE AMONG THE LAWLESS.

BY JOS. E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "PACIFIC PETE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

JOAQUIN MURIETA.

WITH the snarl, fierce and deadly, of a wild beast leaping upon its prey, Three-Fingered Jack sprang toward Little Volcano. And rapidly yet gently lowering his end of the litter, Little Volcano, nothing loth, prepared to meet his attack. But sharp and clear as the note of a trumpet, the Mexican's voice interrupted them.

"Hold—back there, Manuel Garcia—back, I say, or by the Mother of God! I will drain your black heart of its last blood-drop!"

Reckless, blood-loving though he was, Three-Fingered Jack paused, though still sullenly fuming his keen blade. It was hard to deny his lust of vengeance and hatred, yet he well knew the man whose warning had he received. The first sign of disobedience would be instantly punished.

"You don't know him, captain," he said, growlingly, yet in a respectful tone. "You remember how The Scorch and Mountain Jim were killed? That young devil helped to kill them."

"Peace, Three-Fingers—and mark well what I say—not only you but every member of our family. This gentleman," he added, placing a hand upon the boy miner's shoulder; "this gentleman is my friend and brother. To-day he saved more than my life. I owe him a debt that I can never repay, though I live as long as yonder tree. I brought him here, that you all might see and remember him. Paint his face in your hearts—and remember that he must be as sacred to your weapons as though he was the veritable son of the Holy Mother. The hand that is raised against him in anger, is raised against me. I swear, by all that I hold holy, to hunt to the death any and every person who harms so much as a hair of his head. I swear it—I, JOAQUIN MURIETA!"

Little Volcano started back in surprise. Despite the Mexican's avowal, he could not believe that this man, so handsome, so courteous and gentle, was indeed the notorious pirate of the placers of whom so many sickening tales were told—whose ruthless murders outnumbered the years of his life—the man who was commonly represented as a hideous, blood-drinking giant. The outlaw noted his start with a faint smile, as he motioned a couple of his men to lift the litter and carry it to the tent of old Juanita, the medicine-woman of the band. Then, signing Little Volcano to follow him, he passed on to a larger tent, pitched apart from the rest. Entering this he bade his guest be seated, placing some food before him, with a flask of wine.

"I beg, señor," he added, earnestly; "I beg that you will await me here for a few moments. I am anxious about my wife. As soon as I learn Juanita's verdict, I will return here. There's something I would tell you before we part."

Little Volcano had time for some sober thinking while left alone. He knew enough of the popular sentiment to feel that the sooner he



The bank gave way beneath his weight, and he rolled down into the ravine, to the very feet of the miners.

bade adieu to the outlaws, the better for his own safety. If his presence among them, as the claimed friend of Murieta, should ever become public, the chances were he would be given a short shrift and a long rope, without benefit of either judge or jury.

"Let me once get out, and the devil may take me if they ever catch me here again," was his muttered comment.

He had made quite a hearty meal before Joaquin returned, with a lightened countenance.

"Senor, congratulate me. Juanita tells me that one week's quiet will restore my wife to fair health. I owe you more than I thought. Only for you, she would now be—"

The outlaw's voice trembled, and the brilliancy of his black eye was dimmed with something very like a tear. Little Volcano, though, now knew what manner of a man his new acquaintance was, could not help feeling a strong interest in him, though at the same time eager to bid such dangerous friends a final adieu.

Murieta must have detected something of this sort in his words or looks, for his face clouded and his eyes drooped for a moment, as if hurt. But then he said:

"Words are too poor for thanks such as mine, señor. This may prove my sincerity plainer, Nay, take it," he added, hastily, at the boy miner hesitated. "You can, without fear. Though there is blood upon the hand that offers it, the secret was won honestly. I alone know of the placer. It is yours now, to make use of as you may see fit."

"But"—hesitated Little Volcano, "if this mine is so rich, why don't you work it yourself, and so—that is—"

"Instead of mining gold by shedding blood, you would say," interposed Joaquin, with a faint smile.

"You need not fear to speak bluntly—it would take more than words from you to anger me. And then my skin is not as tender as of old. But let that pass. I am glad you suggested that doubt, since it gives me an excuse for telling you my story—only my wife has heard the truth of it—but somehow I would like you to know me as I was, before they drove me to the devil. Then, when you hear men talk of me, you can say—well, fiendish as he is now, there is some excuse for him."

"Not if the story would pain you—"

"It is almost the only pleasure I have. Pain?

There are times, señor, when I am forced to run away by myself, and when alone among the mountains, to repeat my wrongs to the spirits of the air. It would drive me mad else. But there—I am talking wildly."

After a few moments' pause, as though seeking to collect his thoughts, Murieta began his story in a low, subdued tone, growing colder as he proceeded as though he feared to trust his utterance.

"My father was an American—a hunter and trapper. His name was John Merrit, but this became Juan Murieta when he came to live among my mother's people. She was a Sonoran. She saved my father's life one time, and then he married her. Only brother Carlos and I lived to manhood. Father was shot dead by our side at Palo Alto. When the trouble came, he was true to his native country, and his sons fought with him for America. It was with him and among the Americans that I learned what men were. Little of my mother's blood remained in me after that. But father died, and Carlos and I returned to our mother. Twice did I have to fight for my faith in the Americans, when some of my mother's people insulted them."

"Well, I married—she was called Carmela Felix. That was in '48. Then came the gold discovery. Carlos was then at the Mission of San Jose. He wrote me to come quickly—that a fortune awaited the gathering. Carmela and I met him at San Francisco. Brother was in trouble about a grant of land, near which had been discovered plenty of gold. His only witness was then at Hangtown. We left Carmela at the Mission Dolores, and set out upon our journey. At Sacramento we bought fresh horses, and rode to Hangtown. There we found Florez, the witness we needed. I was feeling unwell, and my comrades left me at the house while they took a ride through the mines.

"I heard a loud noise. Stepping to the door, I saw two men dangling from a tree. I could recognize the faces, distorted though they were—my brother Carlos, and his friend, Florez.

"The men from whom we bought our horses had followed us and declared that the animals were stolen. That word was enough—besides, the men accused were only greasers."

"That was the first blow."

"I returned home, vowing vengeance, but Carmela persuaded me not. We soon after took up a claim on the Stanislaus river, and were doing well. The claim was very rich, and we were making a fortune rapidly. Though I had not forgotten my brother's murder, my feelings had calmed, and I bore hatred only to the two men who had sworn his life away. Had I ever met either of them my knife would have found a hot sheath in his heart."

"Word of our rich strike spread far and wide. Miners flocked to the spot in scores,

taking up claims upon every side of me. But of them all, not one was to be compared with mine in its yield of gold. And day by day the hard feelings grew. From black and previous looks it passed on to hints, then open threats.

They said it was a shame that a cowardly,

thieving greaser should have the pick of the valley. I bore it all quietly for my wife's sake, but I would not run away from them.

"The storm broke at last. Twenty armed men came to my cabin one day, and ordered me to leave, swearing that no one of my race should gather gold in their neighborhood. I showed them my papers. They laughed at them. One fellow snatched them from my hand and tore them up. I knocked him down. The rest set upon me in a body. I did what I could. But one man against twenty? I was knocked down and beaten senseless—they thought me dead. As I fell, I heard Carmela scream, and saw her rush forward to shield me from their blows. They seized her—then all was black."

"It was night when I awoke. She was lying beside me, dying. She told me all—you can guess—and died, as I touched her lips. That was the second blow."

"I must have gone crazy. It was months after, that I can first remember. Then I found myself mining at Murphy's Diggings, in Calaveras county. But when memory returned I had no heart for work. I could only think of my murdered Carmela. A devil in my heart kept urging me to avenge her, blood for blood. I fought against it, but could only drown remembrance in drink. I left my claim and took to gambling. I did this, honestly, to keep from worse. But only when I was drunk would the devil's voice be still. And every man that passed by me, I would catch myself trying to remember whether he was not one of the faces surrounding me on that black day."

"It was in the summer of '50. I had been visiting a friend, who lent me a horse to ride back. As I entered camp, a man yelled out, 'horse-thief!' I was secured. He proved that the animal was really his. I told my story. A party of men rode off to arrest my friend."

"Some of the party holding me captive proposed to hang me, and thus end the matter, right or wrong. Others objected. One—an Englishman—said to flog, then ride me out of camp on a rail. The rest agreed. I was stripped to the skin, and then the Englishman struck me forty-nine lashes. They set me astride a rail and carried me a mile out of camp, warning me that to return would be death."

"That was the third and last blow!"

"That night I procured clothes and arms of a friend. I entered the camp, sought out the man who had flogged me, and stabbed him to the heart. That was my first blow, but not my last. From that day until now—I might say until my death—I lived only for vengeance. And I have had it—yes, I have had it!"*

* This, I believe, is the truest sketch of Joaquin Murieta's life that has yet been published.

It was given me by a friend who, in '55-'56, had for a "mate" one of the band that killed Murieta and Three-Fingered Jack. This mate was married to a comrade of the outlaw. From her he received the story, told it to my friend, who, in turn, transmitted it to me.—J. E. B., Jr.

Little Volcano said nothing. He was busy thinking over the sad, tragic tale he had heard. While listening to the man he could not help believing in his truth, and, while still abhorring his crimes, felt a strong sympathy for his terrible wrongs.

Joaquin misinterpreted his silence, and arose, proudly, yet with a sorrowful look in his dark eye. The words he was about to speak were suddenly cut short by a rifle-shot, closely followed by a wild shriek of agony.

The body of a human being came toppling down from the rocks above—a loud cheer was heard—a yell of exultation and triumph.

"We are attacked!" cried Murieta. "Flee, senior—fly for your life while there is a chance! If you are seen here with us, nothing can save your life!"

CHAPTER VIII.

ADVENTURES BY THE WAY.

LITTLE VOLCANO hesitated. Upon the hills, not far from the spot from whence dropped the corpse of the surprised sentinel, he could see the active forms of a score or more rough-clad miners, dropping from ledge to ledge, caring little for bruises or falls, thinking only of the enemy below, whose death they had sworn in solemn concert. He saw them, and knew that to be discovered within the outlaws' camp would stamp him as one of their number. It looked cowardly to run, yet he could not stand and fight against the man-hunters. Neither could he—in his present mood—join them against Murieta.

With the hasty warning, Joaquin had turned away, never doubting but it would be heeded. Only a stern resolve to fight hard, to fight to the death in defense of his helpless wife, whom he loved even more tenderly than his first, the murdered Carmela—he had thoughts for nothing else.

Already the dropping fire grew more steady and continuous. The outlaws, quickly recovering from their surprise, flocked to the call of Joaquin, fighting desperately, for they knew that defeat meant inevitable death.

This much the boy miner saw, then he turned and picked his way up the valley as rapidly as was consistent with safety. The trail was easy enough. He had only to pass up the valley for a reasonable distance, then leave it by any convenient defile, else by scaling the hills. After that—what? Little Volcano looked a little puzzled. While following Joaquin's lead, he had completely lost his bearings. The lay of the ground was an enigma to him. He had never been in the vicinity before. He had paid little attention to the sun; besides, now it was almost directly above his head.

A few moments' thinking, puzzling over his situation, was enough to convince Little Volcano that he was indeed lost. But this did not give him much uneasiness. He knew that he could not be many miles from Hard Luck, and a view from the top of almost any of the surrounding peaks would set him aright.

Striking into a narrow defile, he glided rapidly along, soon leaving behind him the sounds of fighting. Only a few hours before he would have gladly welcomed the tidings that Joaquin Murieta's race was run, but now—so deep an impression had the outlaw's history made upon him—he caught himself hoping that he at least, with his beautiful wife, Rush escape unharmed.

"The devil is never as black as they paint him. They make Joaquin out a perfect fiend—a murderer for pure love of bloodshed. Never a word is said of his wrongs. Even suppose he stretched the facts a little, what he must have suffered was enough to make a devil of a saint. I can't blame him much for taking the war-trail—I would have done as much myself."

Possibly Little Volcano would not have admitted as much to any one else, but he really meant what he said to himself. The magic of the outlaw's words had not entirely left him.

Satisfied that he had made a sufficient circuit to carry him clear of the miners, the boy miner veered to the right, hoping thus to strike the trail followed while bearing the litter, fearing that, even if he had easily retraced his steps to the pocket where he had left his tools. He could still hear an occasional far-away shot, and from this fact he judged that the outlaws had taken to the rocks and were still standing at bay.

Suddenly Little Volcano paused, then sprung behind a clump of bushes beside him. Among the mountains, as on the prairie, every prudent man regards a stranger as an enemy until he is proven the contrary.

Parting the leaves, Little Volcano peered forth upon the object of his suspicions. Presently the hard look in his eyes softened, and a smile crept over his face.

A man was sitting at the foot of a distorted pine tree. Upon his knees, nursing it with both hands as though it were a baby, he held a capacious leather flask. At brief intervals this was carefully elevated until their lips met in a long, loving kiss, then the lightened vessel would rest again upon his lap, with one horny palm affectionately caressing its polished side.

"Hyar's lookin' t'ards ye, pard," politely quoth the toper, gravely nodding toward his imaginary companion.

"Drink hearty, pard—longer breath and a bigger stomach to ye!" laughed Little Volcano, as he stepped from his covert and advanced toward the man.

"I see ye an' call—show yer hand!" sharply cried the fellow, with flask in one hand and cocked revolver in the other, all traces of drunkenness vanishing as if by magic.

"A bob-tail flush—the pot's yours," replied the boy miner, promptly falling in with his

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humor. "Easy, pard—don't come down too heavy on a stranger. Tain't white man's law to give a fellow a bullet when he asks for a friendly nip of oh-be-joyful."

"I didn't know but you was Walk-in, or some o' his tribe, when you first spoke—but now I see ye, reckon ye don't look very dangerous, a'ter all," grunted the miner, lowering his weapon.

"I know I'm little, but those who tackle me generally find me woolly and hard to carry," retorted the youth.

"Your tongue makes the biggest part o' ye—but squat down. It's mighty pore business, this drinkin' fer both sides. You came most too late, but I reckon that's enough left to ile your inside works."

Little Volcano accepted the invitation, partly because he was thirsty, but mainly with the hope of being set aright as to his present whereabouts.

"You wasn't long o' us?" half asked the man, after a mutual health had been drunk.

"I guess not—I don't think we've met before," replied the boy miner, looking more closely at his new acquaintance, but without greatly increasing his respect for that worthy.

Tall, broad-shouldered and heavy, but loosely built, with large bones and awkward members; a shock of unkempt hair, sunburnt to a mottled hay-color; a beard a frown, now dampened with whisky and tobacco-juice; a face, puffy and unwholesome, pimpled and whisky-veined; eyes bleared and bloodshot. Add a red flannel shirt, greasy and torn; trousers even more dilapidated; cowhide boots full of holes; a belt with knife and two revolvers—all rusty and neglected—and you have the picture of a California bummer.

"I knowed it!" I said to myself, soon's I set peepers on ye—that's a' unlucky cuss—I did so! You don't know what you're missin'—but mebbe tain't too late. Anybody else, I'd never say a word—but honest, I like your looks. Minds me, sorter, of the boy I left to home—my Babby—on the farm. The darnedest, smartest boy you ever see! why, he'd astically steal the aigs from under a broodin' weasel, and wouldn't never faze a har. Mind, I'm talkin' now."

"Never mind that—can you tell me—"

"You bet! I caido do nothin' else. I knowed you'd jine—I seed it in your eye! Yes, I did so! You know that's five thousand dollars offered—"

"For what?" sharply interrupted Little Volcano, a suspicion of the truth flashing across his mind.

"For his head—what else? You see, I've razed a comp'ny—the gayest old outfit you ever saw! We're goin' huntin' this cussed Walk-in. We've got him in a hole. He's our'n, shore. You must jine us—"

"Thank you—not any in mine! But what are you doing here while the rest are—that is, where are they?"

"Young feller," said the drunkard, slowly, "air you a white man—air you honest? Then you've got to jine us. They're no two ways 'bout it. Ef you don't—wal, what kin we think but that you're a frien' o' them cut-throats? An' ef we think that, what'll be the end? A hemp rope—a necktie party—an' you'll be thar—at the wrong eend o' the rope for comfort. That's me talkin'!"

"And where would I be, all the time you were doing this?" sharply uttered the boy miner. "From your talk one would think you were—who are you, anyhow?"

"Who air I? When you see men take off that hats an' speak low like they was afraid the yeth would open an' swaller 'em up, then they're talkin' o' me—the rarin' waugh-hoss o' Grand River—the squelin' colt as was never backed—tho' critter as kin squeal louder, buck higher, jump furder, kick higher—"

"And run faster than greased lightning when he hears the voice of a man!" sharply interrupted Little Volcano, with a gesture of contempt.

The braggart stared in amaze for a moment, then stepped forward, raising both fists as though he would crush the insolent striping into the earth. But he, as more than one had before him, counted without his host. Little Volcano was not fond of being crushed.

He sprung forward, planting his fists fairly upon the braggart's bare throat. Falling heavily backward, the brute lay quivering like a stricken ox.

"There!" muttered the boy miner, as he removed the knife and pistols from his belt and flung them into the hollow. "The next time you run across a little boy, I guess you'll think twice about scaring him so bad!"

Laughing over the astonishment of the "waugh-hoss," when he should recover from the double compliment, Little Volcano strode rapidly on in the course he thought the right one. The encounter put him in a good humor, and before long he remembered the chart given him by Joaquin. To his chagrin, he found the landmarks—or rather the names given them—strange ones to him, though otherwise the directions were easily understood. Doubtless the outlaw had intended giving him full explanations had not the surprise interrupted them.

Again was Little Volcano startled. He heard the sound of pick-strokes close at hand. Knowing how jealous prospectors are of any espial, particularly when successful in "making a strike," he sought cover, then crawled cautiously along until he reached the verge of the ravine where the gold-diggers were at work. Peering stealthily over, he could scarcely suppress a ery at the sight meeting his eyes.

Little Volcano knew that his very life was in danger. Honest or not, few men would hesitate at crime—even murder—to keep such a secret to themselves, and these lucky ones wore no appearance of being saints. Yet, knowing this, such was the fascination the gold had over him, that the boy miner could not retreat. He gloated over the golden pile as though it were his own. He even made a hasty calculation as to its value. More—he nearly made up his mind to announce himself, and lay claim to a share of the find, as the price of his silence. Almost—but not quite. He was still sensible enough to know that such a course could scarcely end save in bloodshed—in their death or his own.

Then—the bank gave way beneath his weight, and he rolled down into the ravine, to the very feet of the miners!

CHAPTER IX.

SLEEPY GEORGE AND OLD ZIMRI.

STEALING along like an Indian upon the war-trail, with bowed head and careful foot, taking advantage of every bush and boulder, parting the branches and letting them ease back as he passed through, now gliding rapidly forward, now bending down until he lay almost prostrate—a human lizard. His actions were those of a man hunting some suspicious and wary an-

imal that a single false step might alarm and send it off forever beyond his reach.

Hunting he was—but his object was human game.

Before him glided a man, winding and doubling through the broken hills and gulches, yet not like one wandering aimlessly. Steadily he kept on, never once turning his head, evidently all unsuspecting of the danger threatening him. More than once the trailer paused and raised his pistol; but as often was it lowered, undischarged. Possibly he feared for his aim—or maybe he wished to learn the destination of his victim before striking him down.

As though gathering confidence from his victim's abstraction, the man-hunter gradually lessened the distance between them. His dull eyes began to glow, his face to flush more deeply. He had resolved to strike, and immediately.

As though to favor him still further, the foremost man paused at the mouth of a rocky pass, thickly lined with bushes and parasitic plants. Kneeling down and resting his pistol upon a bush, the assassin took a long and deliberate aim at his unconscious victim—his finger pressed the trigger.

"Hollow, pretty—sayin' your prayers?" cried aloud a shrill, peculiar voice, and a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder.

The assassin started—his weapon exploded—with a cry of angry surprise he started back, a look of terror upon his wolfish features.

"Wal, I be burned! You're the fust two-legged human critter I ever see as shot hisself off by a tetch on the shoulder—old man, I congradate ye—I do so! You're a nat'r'l cur'osity. Ef you was on'y mine, I'd make a 'pendent fortune out o' ye, lettin' o' ye out for a self-prambylatin' two-legged howlitzer down to the forts—they'd pay a big price—"

"Give us a rest," growled the fellow, edging away from the loquacious new-comer. "You ain't got no call to pester me, as I knows on. Go your way, an' I'll go mine."

As he spoke, he cast a quick glance toward the defile. He could see nothing but the natural leaves and rocks. His bullet must have sped clear of its mark.

"That's where you make a mistake, pard," was the cool reply. "I hev got a call to you—a most powerful one, too. I thought so the first time we ever met—an' when I see you jest now, I was dead sure on it. Thar—" he added, as the man drew himself together, as one does who anticipates an assault. "Take it easy. They ain't no call for you to be ashamed. I'm a professor, too—"

"A—what?"

"No—a professor—ligion, ye know. An' when I seed you thar, kneelin' down to your votions, I sais, 'Says I—thar's the pard for me. He won't go back on a frien'; them as does sich like ain't the ones as need watchin' with all two both o' your eyes to vent his cheatin' ye out o' yer boots—he'll play far, you bet! That's what I said—but I don't know now. Pears like it'd be rather dangerous bein' safe when you go off so durnd easy—"

During this speech, Sleepy George—for the reader will readily recognize him—was a prey to strongly mingled emotions. Certain that his attempted murder had been discovered, he held himself ready to fight for his life, though he did not relish Zimri Coon for an antagonist. But the old man was so cool, his queer face lighted up with a look of kindly approval while speaking, that the bummer began to believe that he had overlooked the form of the crazy artist entirely. To assure himself, one way or the other, he bluntly interrupted Old Zimri:

"Prayin' h—! I was drawin' bead on a head o' game sech as ye won't find easy—an' man!" he cried, then darted swiftly away.

Sleepy George stared in amazement. He could not understand what it all meant. Nor did he have much spare time. A loud snif startled him, and glancing along the ledge he found himself face to face with an enormous grizzly!

"Right that, long that shelf, is whar the old man is. 'Lil you go fast, or shall I?" asked old Zimri.

For answer Sleepy George grasped the vine and swung himself over the escarpment, quickly reaching the ledge. But instead of following, old Zimri snatched the vine up and flung it far from him, with a mocking laugh.

"Watch the gold fer me on tel I come, old man!" he cried, then darted swiftly away.

Sleepy George stared in amazement. He could not understand what it all meant. Nor did he have much spare time. A loud snif startled him, and glancing along the ledge he found himself face to face with an enormous grizzly!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 335.)

strikes of fabulous richness—of "pockets of gold" where one stroke of the miner's pick turned up a fortune.

Together they passed through the defile in which the crazy artist had vanished, and strode on through the rugged and broken hills, Coon's tongue rattling volubly, principally concerning his discovery. But a chance remark regarding Little Volcano recalled to Sleepy George the late instructions of Long Tom, and he said:

"You spoke o' countin' on him as your pard, at first. Then I spos he was watching him like you did me? They's sum folks back thar as sais the feller ain't just what he wants 'em to think. 'Tain't nothin' to me, only—if they's no secret in it, an' you know, mebbe thar's nothin' to hinder you tellin' me who the devil he is, anyhow?"

The studied carelessness with which Sleepy George tried to speak, did not escape the keen-witted old man, but he paid no outward notice to it. Glancing quickly around, pressing one finger upon his lips, he muttered:

"Mind how you speak, pard—they's danger in it—they is, a *heap*, too! Jest try an' mem'ner, now; did you ever chance to see him when he was plum alone—when they wasn't nobody else 'ithin' easy call o' him? No, you never did! 'cause why—he's guarded day an' night. Mebbe you won't see 'em, but they'll be there, all the same. Let a hand be raised against him, no matter whar he may be, an' before it could fall, ther'd be fifty knives an' pistols a-barin' right on the feller's heart as did it. You jest try it on some time—but not ontill after we've cleaned out the pocket—an' you'll see I'm tellin' the plain, solid truth. Afore you could wink twice, they wouldn't be enough o' you left to grease a patchin'! I tell you, pard, them as thinks mischievous to tha' little cuss, 'd better settle up all their business afore they tries it on," added Coon, impressively.

"But who is he?" persisted Sleepy George, his eyes aglow.

"I won't speak it out loud—they's no tellin' whar his friends ain't—but gi' me your ear so. But fust—promise you'll never tell nobody—swar it, honest Injun!"

The bummer complied. Coon put his lips to his ear and whispered in a low tone:

"He's—he's Queen Victory, in disguise!"

Sleepy George uttered an oath of disgust. But Zimri said, seriously:

"That's the best answer you could git. They's no tellin' what might be the end on it if ye known who he really was. They say he's got more'n twenty devils as kerrys him evry word anybody speaks about him. Stop a moment. You see that blasted tree, yender? Wall, right that is whar we go down to my pocket!"

Forgettings the jest in his avarice, Sleepy George darted forward and soon stood upon the verge of a deep canyon, or what seemed to be an oblong pit, a hundred feet in depth, with almost perpendicular sides. Coon drew a coil of grapevine from beneath a rock, wound one end around the tree trunk, then dropped the coil over upon a ledge some twenty feet below.

"Right that, long that shelf, is whar the old man is. 'Lil you go fast, or shall I?" asked old Zimri.

For answer Sleepy George grasped the vine and swung himself over the escarpment, quickly reaching the ledge. But instead of following, old Zimri snatched the vine up and flung it far from him, with a mocking laugh.

"Watch the gold fer me on tel I come, old man!" he cried, then darted swiftly away.

Sleepy George stared in amazement. He could not understand what it all meant. Nor did he have much spare time. A loud snif startled him, and glancing along the ledge he found himself face to face with an enormous grizzly!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 335.)

THE WINNER'S RING.

BY JOHN GOSSIP.

From infancy to age there gleams, more lucent than a star.
A ringlet cast in Nature's mint, and worn by serif or czar.

It bears the wisdom of all books upon its golden face.
And tells the secret of the soul that wins it in Life's race:

An exhortation old as Time, transcending human lore—
"Whate'er thou doest, do it well; 'tis done forevermore!"

The Sword Hunters:

OR,
THE LAND OF THE ELEPHANT RIDERS.

A Sequel to "Lance and Lasso."

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "RED RAJAH," "IRISH CAPTAIN,"
"LANCE AND LASO," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BLACK HILLS.

In a few weeks after the above conversation, a small, well-appointed caravan was wending its way through a most delightful country by the banks of a lovely little stream, the headwaters of the Shary. Around them lay rolling green meadows, spangled with thousands of flowers, and little park-like clumps of noble trees were scattered here and there, all over the face of the country, which fell away in a series of rolling terraces to the north, where the white glimmer of water showed the existence of Lake Tchad. To the south it continued to rise by slow degrees, to where a distant blue line of hills barred the prospect. And beyond these again, cutting the blue sky sharply, were three white peaks, that glittered in the sun under their mantles of ice and snow.

"Those are the Snow Mountains," said Ibu Ayoud, the Shoa merchant, gravely. "Beyond there lies the hidden country of the Elephant Riders, and those hills hold the black robbers I told you of. We will go with you to the foot of them, but nothing would tempt us beyond them."

Manuel Garcia turned and looked proudly back over his well-appointed cavalcade. There were at least twenty well armed men, who could be depended on to the last gasp, who all bore muskets. Manuel had also unpacked a case of revolvers, and distributed them to his six Hamraus, whom he knew to be the best soldiers of all, in point of courage.

"That's enough!" said Sleepy George, eagerly. "Jest show me my work—no matter what it is nor how dirty. Id wade through h—l chin deep for a chance at a pocket like that!"

"Tain't so fur off as that—not quite," laughed Zimri.

"Two hours from now'll take us to it. Ef it's all understand—w'e're to go even shares, to work fa' an' no tricks—why we'll go right that now an' open up work."

It is needless to say that the bummer greedily accepted the offer. If the reader thinks him too credulous, it must be remembered that was the age of wonderful surprises, indeed, was the surprising quantity and tameness of the game. Elephants and giraffes, usually so

timid, seemed to have no fear here, and browsed as if they never were in the habit of being hunted.

The poorly-armed negroes and Arabs, unprovided with fire arms in most cases, were afraid to tackle these elephants, who came and broke their fences, and trampled down their rice fields without mercy. Manuel had no difficulty in riding up alongside of the finest pair of tusks in the party, and plugging a shell into him at a few feet distance. The huge beast staggered and swayed, fell on its knees, and finally on its side, stone dead, while the rest of the herd, panic-stricken, dashed off, trumpeting shrilly, leaving the field to Manuel, who had slain their leader with the deadly percussion shell.

The little caravan pursued its march, and came up to Manuel, when the young man pointed to the long white tusks, and said briefly:

"Cut them out, Selim, and load them on a camel. The Elephant Riders will fare no better when they see us, if they try to hurt us. Now, Ibu Ayoud, will you guide us to the pass in the mountains?"

"Indeed I dare not," said Ibu Ayoud. "There are but few of us who have ever been further than here, and I only know of one path through the Black Hills, which you can find without a guide, for it is quite plain. Beyond that we dare not go. The hidden people might attack us at any moment."

"Very well, then," said Manuel, good-naturedly; "we will not ask you to go any further than we can find our own way, I suppose. Will you go now from us? I press forward."

"Then we go back," said Ibu Ayoud, mournfully. "Oh, noble strangers! do not tempt Allah thus, by rushing against certain death. No one ever came back who went on that track."

"Then we shall be the first," said Manuel, cheerfully. "Farewell, Ibu Ayoud. Success attend you in all your undertakings, and may we soon meet again, and tell over our

"Well, then," said Manuel, "they cannot hurt us, for we carry thunder and lightning in these tubes. If your people have fears, we will show them that we can put to flight all the armies of the Elephant Riders. All we want is a guide, and one to speak for us. You cannot keep those knives until you have brought us the man who was a slave. I have spoken. Go."

This altered the faces of the poor Baboosas. They looked wistfully at the coveted knives, and at length one of them volunteered to go for the man who had been a slave, if they would let him take his knife, and leave the other two behind. Manuel consented to this, and went forward with the caravan to the foot of the Black Hills, where he went into camp by a little opening, in a grove of oak and beech trees.

The caravan was made into a square, and loaded sentries were put on each face, with loaded muskets, to guard against treachery from the Baboosas. The two hostages were kept under guard in the middle of the camp, and the fires were kindled for supper. Toward sunset the absent Baboo returned with the desired individual, who proved to be a reckless, dare-deviling fellow, bearing a short javelin, the staff made of ebony inlaid with ivory in beautiful patterns, the head composed of a very hard, shining bronze, that took a keen edge.

Manuel examined the weapon with great curiosity, when he learned that it had been stolen by the Baboo from the temple of Ozireez. The artistic excellence of the work was far ahead of anything that he had seen on Egyptian monuments, the drawing of the figures (which were elephants led by men in procession) equal to that of a Greek bas-relief. It was evident that the Egyptian colony had made some advances in art, in the lapse of centuries, and their new position.

Manuel made much of this adventurous Baboo, who held communication in a round-about way with him through his comrade, who understood Arabic. He had none of the latter's fears, and expressed himself willing to guide the party across the river.

"You'll never get across it alive," he said, laughing.

"The men of the south have a town close to there, and they can march an army down to the river in half a day, that will eat you up. But I will show you the pass. They treated me kindly enough, though I was their slave."

"Have they any guns?" inquired Manuel, curious to find if Sheik Haroun was right.

"No," said the Baboo. "They have wonderful machines that cast great stones, and they have bows and arrows and spears, but none of the fire weapons that come from the north. They had some once, so the priests told me, which they took from the Felataths, who attacked them; but that is long ago, and the captured weapons were hung up in the temples, for no man knew how to use them."

The travelers were never weary of asking questions of the quick-witted Baboo, who seemed to have lost all the timidity and lumpish look of the others, from his intercourse with the hidden people. They learned how the people had elephants in common employment throughout the country, to plow the fields, drag and carry stone for buildings, and to serve in the army; that their only dreaded enemies were the Felataths of the south, who had guns, and made forays on them, but that they had always beaten them off by superior discipline.

The early part of the night passed in hearing the wonderful tales, and it was from a mingled dream of the splendors of the hidden people, that Manuel was roused by Curtis to take his morning watch.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 323.)

WHEN LOVERS MET.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

That autumn night, so wondrous bright,
Still gleams through mists of years.
'Twas bathed in rays of silver light
And music soft from wavelets white,
Ah me! it held no tears.

That autumn night.

That starry night, when scarce a sound
Disturbed the fragrant air,
When sweetest winds that hovered round
Were not as sweet as gyres that bound
Our hearts in fetters there.

That starry night.

That silvery night, with perfect rest
Stole to my longing heart;
Who for her love seemed found a breast,
Seemed found for ay a haven blest,
From which to never part.

That silvery night.

That perfect night, when lips now cold
Bestowed their sweets on mine,
My love it died, The tale is told,
But nevermore can man hold,
While autumn moons shall shine,

A perfect night.

LA MASQUE.

The Veiled Sorceress; OR, THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

A TALE OF ILLUSION, DELUSION AND MYSTERY.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "THE TWIN
SISTERS," "AN AWFUL MYSTERY,"
"ERMINIE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIX—CONTINUED.

"WELL!" cried the young knight, impatiently; "I am waiting. Go on!"

"My dear Kingsley," responded the count, in his easy way, "I think you are laboring under a little mistake. I have nothing to go on about; it is you who are to begin the controversy."

"Do you dare to play with me?" exclaimed Sir Norman, furiously. "I tell you to take care how you speak! What have you done with Leoline?"

"That is the fourth or fifth time you have asked me that question," said the count, with provoking indifference. "What do you imagine I have done with her?"

Sir Norman's feelings, which had been rising ever since their meeting, got up to such a height at this aggravating question, that he gave vent to an oath, and laid his hand on his sword; but the count lightly interposed before it came out.

"Not yet, Sir Norman. Be calm; talk rationally. What do you accuse me of doing with Leoline?"

"Do you dare deny having carried her off?" "Deny it! No; I am never afraid to father my own deeds."

"Ah!" said Sir Norman, grinding his teeth. "Then you acknowledge it?"

"I acknowledge it—yes. What next?"

The perfect composure of his tone fell like a cool, damp towel on the fire of Sir Norman's

wrath. It did not quite extinguish the flame, however—only quenched it a little—and it still hissed hotly underneath.

"And you dare to stand before me and acknowledge such an act?" exclaimed Sir Norman, perfectly astounded at the cool assurance of the man.

"Verily ye," said the count, laughing. "I seldom take the trouble to deny my acts. What next?"

"There is nothing next," said Sir Norman, severely, "until we come to a proper understanding about this. Are you aware, sir, that that lady is my promised bride?"

"No, I do not know that I am. On the contrary, I have an idea she is mine."

"She was, you mean. You know she was led into consenting by yourself and her nurse?"

"Softly she consented; and a bond is a bond, and a promise a promise, all the world over."

"Not with a woman," said Sir Norman, with stern dogmatism. "It is their privilege to break their promise and change their mind sixty times a day if they choose. Leoline has seen fit to do both, and has accepted me in your stead; therefore I command you instantly to give her up!"

"Softly, my friend—softly. How was I to know all this?"

"You ought to have known it!" returned Sir Norman, in the same dogmatical way; "or if you didn't, you do now; so say no more about it. Where is she, I tell you?" repeated the young man, in a frenzy.

"Your patience one moment longer, until we see which of us has the best right to the lady. I have a prior claim."

"A forced one. Leoline does not care a snap for you—and she loves me."

"What extraordinary bad taste!" said the count, thoughtfully. "Did she tell you this?"

"Yes; she did tell me this, and a great deal more. Come—have done talking, and tell me where she is, or I'll—"

"Oh, no, you wouldn't!" said the count, soothingly. "Since matters stand in this light, I will tell you what I'll do. I acknowledge having carried off Leoline, viewing her as my promised bride, and have sent her to my own house, in the care of a trusty messenger, where, I give you my word of honor, I have not been since. She is as safe there, and much safer than in her own house, until morning, and it would be a pity to disturb her at this unseasonable hour. When the morning comes we will both go to her together—state our rival claims—and whichever one she decides on accepting, can have her, and end the matter at once."

The count paused, and so did his hearer, and meditated. This proposal was all very fair and nice on the surface, but Sir Norman, with his usual penetration and acuteness, looked further than the surface and found a flaw.

"And how am I to know?" he asked dubiously, "that you will not go to her to-night, and spirit her off where I will never hear or see either of you again?"

"In the very best way in the world: we will not part company until morning comes; now, are we at peace?" inquired the count, smiling, and holding out his hand.

"Until then, we will have to be, I suppose," replied Sir Norman, rather ungraciously, touching the hand as if it were red-hot, and dropping it again. "And are we to stand here and look at each other, in the meantime?"

"By no means! Even the most sublime prospect tires when surveyed too long. There is a little excursion which I would like you to accompany me on, if you have no objection."

"Where to?"

"To the ruin, where you have already been twice to-night."

Sir Norman stared.

"And who told you this, Sir Count?"

"Never mind; I have heard it. Would you object to a third excursion there before morning?"

Again Sir Norman paused and meditated. There was no use staying where he was, as it would bring him no nearer to Leoline; and nothing was to be gained by killing the count, beyond the mere transitory pleasure of the thing. On the other hand he had an intense and ardent desire to re-visit the ruin, and see what had become of Miranda—the only drawback being that, if they were found they would both be most assuredly beheaded. Then, again, there was Hubert.

"Well?" inquired the count, as Sir Norman looked up.

"I have no objection to go with you to the ruin," was the reply, "only this: if we are seen there, we will be dead men two minutes after; and I have no desire to depart this life until I have had that promised interview with Leoline."

"I have thought of that," said the count, "and have provided for it. We may venture in the lion's den without the slightest danger; all that is required being your promise to guide us thither. Do you give it?"

"I do; but I expect a friend here shortly, and cannot start until he comes."

"If you mean me by that, I am here," said a voice at his elbow; and, looking round, he saw Hubert himself standing there, a quiet listener and spectator of the scene.

Count L'Estrange looked at him with interest, and Hubert, affecting not to notice the survey, watched Sir Norman.

"Well," was that individual's eager address, "were you successful?"

The count was still watching the boy so intently that that most discreet youth was suddenly seized with a violent fit of coughing, which precluded all possibility of reply for at least five minutes; and Sir Norman, at the same moment, felt his arm receive a sharp and warning pinch.

"Is this your friend?" asked the count. "He is a very small one, and seems in a bad state of health."

Sir Norman, still under the influence of the pinch, replied by an inaudible murmur, and looked with a deeply mystified expression, at Hubert.

"He bears a strong resemblance to the lady we were talking of a moment ago," continued the count—"is sufficiently like her, in fact, to be her brother; and, I see, wears the livery of the Earl of Rochester."

"God spare you your eyesight!" said Sir Norman, impatiently. "Can you not see, among the rest, that I have a few words to say to him in private? Permit us to leave you for a moment."

"There is no need to do so. I will leave you, as I have a few words to say to the person who is with me."

So saying, the count walked away, and Hubert followed him with a most curious look.

"Right! I have no objection, but others may."

"And then I refuse to move a step further in the business?" said Sir Norman, with decision.

"And why, my good friend? You surely can have no objection to anything that can be done against highwaymen and cut-throats?"

"Right! I have no objection, but others may."

"Whom do you mean by others?"

"The king, for instance. His gracious majesty is whimsical at times; and who knows but he may take it into his royal head to involve us somehow with them? I know the adage, 'put not your trust in princes.'"

Hubert, looking much relieved. "And, for the present, perfectly safe."

"And did you see her?"

"Of course; and heard her, too. She was dreadfully anxious to come with me; but that was out of the question."

"And how is she to be got away?"

"That I do not clearly see. We will have to bring a ladder, and there will be so much danger, and so little chance of success, that, in fact, it seems an almost hopeless task. Where did you meet Count L'Estrange?"

"Here; and he told me that he had abducted her, and held her a prisoner in his own house."

"He owned that, did he? I wonder you were not fit to kill him?"

"So I was, at first; but he talked the matter over somehow."

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As was announced last week, the beautiful and highly dramatic Society Novel, "Black Eyes and Blue," now running through our columns, will be succeeded by a new novel by the same author—even more brilliant and delightful than its forerunner, which we are pleased to know is the literary hit of the season. Corinne Cushman, at one dash, has become a great favorite. Her second story will confirm her claim to the position of

LEADING STAR OF THE WEEKLIES.

Our readers have discovered the unusual interest and worth of the series of Men of '76, by Dr. Legrand. They are not only biographic memoirs but are so full of the real, exciting events of the great period as to be taken together, an admirable history of the revolution with the rise of the republic. No weekly now published has offered anything to compare with these contributions in entertaining information and graphic interest of narrative. The series, now approaching its completion, will bear careful preservation for future reading and reference. Several correspondents have suggested their republication in book form; but, as this is not practicable, we suggest, in our turn, that the series be cut from the papers and pasted in a neat, firmly bound blank book. This will cost but a trifle, and put the biographies in an excellent form for present and future use. We may add that Dr. Legrand will follow the Men of '76 with a new series of Men noted in American discovery, exploration, settlement and progress—an announcement which we know will be received with satisfaction by a large circle of readers.

Sunshine Papers.

Ons and Offs.

We asked brother to call us at the "first crack of dawn." He said he would if he heard the crack. But, somehow, we did not trust implicitly to his auricular powers, but spent half the night in looking at our watches and the other half in lying awake to be sure and look at them again shortly. So we were up, betimes, and our toilette nearly done when brother's rap at the door warned us that the "crack of dawn," or something else, had penetrated his drowsy consciousness. We did not fail to notify him that we were ahead of him.

"Glad of it. It's the first time!" he replied, with crushing veracity, as he turned to the second installment of his morning nap. We drank our coffee scalding and ventured out in that cool gray time when the city seems steeped in death-like quiet and the only noises heard impress one with the sense of being impious interruptions.

There is, once and awhile, the startling rattling of a milk cart as we hasten toward the depot; occasionally the foot-falls of some early pedestrian sound out clear and strangely loud; one car passes us with a few mournful, morose-looking passengers in it, the conductor nodding, nodding, nodding with care, over his neglected punch, the still burning lamps flar-

ing palely. At the depot we enter a car. Our only companion de voyage is a child of Israel—whether with or without guile being a matter quite beyond our knowledge—broad and short of figure and cased in a pepper and salt suit; in fact, quite suggestive, in general resemblance, of those peculiarly obese little pepper-boxes one often sees upon the tables of country oyster saloons. He settles himself in one corner, stretches his limbs to the full extent of their shortness upon the seat, and gives us a prolonged stare, as one that would say:

"Oh, the remarkableness of these American girls!" Then the conductor comes for our fares—an attenuated and long-drawn-out individual who looks as though all matters connected with this mundane sphere were matters of the most trifling importance to him, and our Israelitish friend falls into a deep reverie. Possibly he chews the bitter end of reflection, though it's quite likely he's rolling a bit of tobacco, like a sweet morsel, under his tongue, while he contemplates the possibility of making an extra dollar on the customer who is coming for his new suit of clothes this morning. Other passengers drop in occasionally but we don't notice them.

We divide our time between watching all the town clocks, looking at our watches, and admiring the gorgeous cloud effects along the eastern sky.

We change to other cars. The driver does his work sitting down, the conductor looks as if he had not quite awakened from his last dream, and the passengers find even the morning papers soporific in their effect. Along the route, occasional night-capped heads are thrust yawningly out of tenement house windows; policemen eat their breakfast upon their beat, using the railing of some store or cellar for an extempore table; the fashionably-thoroughfares look oddly wide and are weirdly silent; but over by the river we find "corners" in market wagons and vegetables.

Down by the ferry, a company of travelers wait upon a corner. They have a generally disordered, jaded, and ill-tempered look. They'll be better nutured after breakfast. It is wonderful how dependent upon man's alimentiveness is the well-being of all the mortal, moral, and spiritual forces of his nature. A fact which no sensible woman will neglect to consider when she wishes to coax out of her lord and master money for "such a love of a bonnet, my dear." We leave the travelers still holding tenaciously to such of their worldly goods—who know but that they may be their all!—as are stored within their dusty valises, and pay our ferrage. Over in the great waiting-rooms many people are coming and going. One rather good-looking paternoster, at the same time, gives his little son and heir lessons in obedience, and glances for smiles of approvement and admiration at a flirtatiously-disposed young damsel in brown. A dilapidated youth anxious to find Long Branch, probably to serve there as some "boots" or "call-boy," has utterly lost his way and is sent off in a state of dire discouragement. There is opening and shutting of doors, clanging of bells, shouting of officials, and, finally, the rushing of the train. Just back of us are May and December with a squalling baby and a French *bonne*. He is gray, snobbish, and ardent. She is girlish, handsome, and indifferent. It is loud-hung, befflered, and as obstreperous as less-favored infants. The nurse is grave, impassioned, and ugly. Altogether we were not inspired with envy. In front of us a party of six laugh a great deal, talk very loud, and make all their remarks with evident intent to entertain all around. A young man, with glasses and a pet mustache, sits opposite us for a little time; but shortly, his place is filled by a sweet-faced cripple, brought to her seat in her brother's arms.

From constant watching of the ons and offs we come at last to make them quite a study, to feel almost as if we knew all about them. Reaching town in the eventide we even get philosophical over our friends of the ferries and cars. This man is a railroad *employee* off duty. We tell it, surely, by his manners. This little woman in black, waiting for him, is his wife. They just meet with a smile and fall to talking. We can almost hear her asking what made the train he came down on so late and is he tired? and isn't she glad to-morrow is Sunday, and his day off? This fair, prettily-faced, large woman in white has missed one boat and is full of impatience. There is something peculiarly charming and natural in her ways; she is evidently a woman who has lived much abroad. There is an utter lack of *mawais honte* and self-consciousness about her, and her manners and dress are perfectness and simplicity combined. On the other side a fine, blonde young man awaits her. They greet each other with a hand-shake. They are not lovers; though she is glad and eager at seeing him, and he laughs as she talks, there is not that responsive glow in either face to the changes of feelings that sweep the other, that indicates the presence of the absorbing passion of love. But they are excellent comrades, one can tell, as they chat with perfect freedom and good-fellowship. And here—ah! we, too, are off.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE.

I came across the following somewhat satirical paragraph the other day—"A poor coat on a rich man is no crime, because he can afford to wear richer raiment; but a poor garment on an indigent person is a sin, because he can afford no better."

That set me to thinking. It put me in mind of a little episode in the life of brother Tom, and as Tom Lawless scarcely ever does anything worth recording—at least as I never seem to give him the credit of doing so—I will rescue him from his oblivion and tell the "owr true tale."

He was visiting one of the pleasant summer resorts last summer and made himself quite sociable with many of the ladies there—a habit of his, for, as he says, the female sex cannot resist him—the silly fellow!

One afternoon, while he and his party were sitting on the piazza, one of the females called his attention to a pale, sickly-looking young man whose garments were not of the finest trim nor of the newest pattern, an appearance of what we style "shabby-genteel" about him. She said: "Don't you think that such a fellow as that ought to know better than to sit on the same piazza with us?" He is no doubt below us in the social scale, and I think it would be right to tell him that his "room" is better than his company. Couldn't you do it, Tom? Tom answered that he couldn't think of such a thing—that the "fellow," as they called him, was worth fifty thousand dollars!

That put an entirely new face on the matter and they placed his shabbiness of dress to the score of *eccentricity*, to which rich folks are sometimes addicted.

The tune was changed. Before, they wished the intruder to be ousted from their presence; now, they desired an introduction, and were "just crazy" to know him; they always did

admire eccentric beings! But Tom was no more willing to oblige them in that respect than he was in the other: he can be provoking on some occasions, without even half trying.

The next day this bevy of feminines met Tom and such a "raking over the coals" as he received from them must have made him feel like crawling into the ends of his boots.

"Tom Lawless," exclaimed one, "you told us an outrageous fib yesterday. You said that fellow, who sat on the piazza, was worth fifty thousand dollars, and the landlord says he's only worth a few dollars, and has to work for his living. Where can you expect to go when you die if you will prevaricate in such a manner?"

Tom's answer was thus: "Fair ladies, I think I uttered no falsehood. Perhaps Sam Melton may not be worth than in gold, or greenbacks—I mean as regards the possession of them—but, if we may judge by his great heart, he is a millionaire. I will tell you a little bit of a story and let you judge for yourselves. There was once a bitter feud existing between the families of Sam Melton and Joe Varnay. Something about fences, right of way; I don't know exactly what the trouble arose from. Anyway, they were "out" with each other, as the saying is. One night Joe's house caught fire, and the child, who was sleeping in an upper room, seemed to have been forgotten in the hurry and confusion incident to such cases. No one was found brave enough to enter the burning building save one, who made his way through fire and smoke, and, issuing forth again, laid the child unharmed at the feet of its horror-stricken parent, and then fainted away.

"The man who saved that child's life was Sam Melton. He had the noblest revenge on his enemy that could be found. We often think a person is noble who is willing to risk his life to aid his friend: how much nobler is it to risk one's life for an enemy! If Sam Melton isn't worth fifty thousand dollars—though he doesn't possess them—I miss my guess."

I am inclined to think that Mr. Tom Lawless was in the right about that, and it seems to me if people were valued more as to their hearts than their pocketbooks, and that worth, not wealth, was the standard we judged a person by, we should be more consistent in our behavior.

Why should *dress* make such a difference in us and with us, and why should money sway the world with such tyrannical power? Why are good hearts allowed to go plodding through the world unmotived and uncared for, while full pocketbooks never lack for friends? Will the last great day unravel this mystery? Will some angels' wings be tipped with gold and others' with silver, and will the gold-tipped ones look down upon the silver-tipped ones? The Duke of Wellington knelt at the communion table, and by his side knelt a poor pauper. The sexton would have removed the pauper, but the Iron Duke reproved him by saying, "Let her remain: we are all equal *here*."

Let us content ourselves by thinking that in heaven pride will be unknown, and in the beautiful land of rest we shall all be equal *there*.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

A Farm For Sale.

I HAVE one of the most excellent farms for sale that any man ever worried with a plow or tickled with a harrow.

It is composed of one-fourth of a very large section of land surrounding the town of Muggs, which is the reason the town is no longer than it is.

This farm is mostly under cultivation, under mortgage, and partly under water.

The depth of it has never been fully determined, but it is supposed to run to the center of the earth.

The soil is so rich that fence-posts set in it generally grow two or three feet every year, and make it necessary to put one or two new boards on every once in awhile. Some old fences are so high now that the clouds have to knock a board off to get through, and the birds get tired of trying to climb over, and give it up.

I lost a knife in one of the fields last year, and a lonely found two in the place of it, that another.

The fertility of this land has never been equaled. Why, the hem on it lay twice the number of eggs that they do on any other farm.

Last year I lost fifty dollars on one field, and this year I have doubled it without any exertion.

A man got a little of this soil under his finger-nails, and in two days they had grown two inches, and he had a fuss with his wife and scratched her eyes nearly out.

A bold friend of mine recently rubbed his head with his hand, which had some of this soil on it, while he was planting potatoes, and in a few days he had a very fine crop of grass on the top of his head, which has to be mowed every once in a while. He thinks now that he is in the hey-day of his youth. See Timothy.

The fertility of this land has never been equalled. Why, the hem on it lay twice the number of eggs that they do on any other farm.

Last year a neighbor's boy came over to see after the health of my watermelons and got stuck in the mud. He couldn't get out, and had to stay there all night. The next morning he had grown from three feet to four feet in height, and was four years older—but it was his own fault, and not mine.

Trees, even after they are cut down on this farm, continue to grow, and my rail fences grow so much in one season that they get over on my neighbor's land many yards before I know it—he never finds it out; and three-quarters of a cord of my wood expands to one cord when I get to town with it; at least, that is what all my customers say when they get a load of it. I have lived on this rich farm for years and have got rich on wood alone.

Worn-out hair-brushes, thrown away on this land, have afterward been picked up with a new growth of bristles, and good as new.

This land is so productive that one acre of it will measure more than an ordinary acre on any other farm, and it will be no exertion for it at all.

This is the only farm in this country that will turn out three pecks of wheat to the bushel, and do it with impunity without flinching.

One dozen bad eggs on this farm will count as many as one dozen good eggs on any other farm, provided the grocer don't look too close.

Everything here is so thrifty that the house I live in, which was originally one-story, is now a three-story with a Mansard roof. But the worst thing of all is this: I had a mortgage on part of it three years ago, of one thousand dollars, which has grown up to three thousand to-day, and it shows you will have to be very careful. This was all on account of the richness of the soil, which operates both for and against.

When I first moved here I had very little respect for my neighbor, but now it has grown into a disgust that turns out and measures six pints to the quart. I am very sorry for this, but I see I can do nothing to help it in the least.

That put an entirely new face on the matter and they placed his shabbiness of dress to the score of *eccentricity*, to which rich folks are sometimes addicted.

The tune was changed. Before, they wished the intruder to be ousted from their presence;

now, they desired an introduction, and were "just crazy" to know him; they always did

This farm was purchased for four dollars an acre, but that has grown—without much cultivation—into two hundred dollars, and you could hardly believe it to be so, unless you saw my figures, and figures won't lie. (I don't know what I might do in that line under provocation.)

Neighbors complain that this farm draws all the substance out of their crops, and puts it into its own, and I am not prepared to deny the fact, although it does look a little to them as downright stealing on the sly.

Boys on this farm attain their majority a year or so before they know it.

The dust that blows into your eyes here does not give you pain, but increases your vision to such an extent that you can see more into your neighbor's business than he could ever imagine.

Were you to have the good fortune to be buried on this farm you will be sure to rise, and this is one of the greatest things to consider when you go to buy a farm.

If you intend to purchase this farm, as everything can be raised on it, and will give notice, it will raise the money for you and do it without growing.

You can raise a disturbance on this farm with a very small hoe.

There are some of the finest pastures here that ever pasture vision, and cattle get so fat that they have to roll home.

There are fences running all around this farm, and they run so lively and vigorously that they go at the rate of a mile in two seventeen, and it takes a pretty fast gate to catch them.

There are several fine wells of water on this land, and the water is as

When her glance at last rested on Redmond, a slight flush came into her pale face; her eyes passed on, but they came back to him, questioningly, again and again.

His curiosity and interest increased. This was no peasant girl. Two hours passed on without any incident, except the occasional call of the little steamer at some village dock; the passengers were called to dinner in the cabin; Sir Israel, the tourists, the commercial travellers, all went—except the common people who ate their bread and cheese on deck, the peasant, and Redmond Rhodes. Redmond remained where he was—he had breakfasted late, and he longed for an opportunity to speak alone with the girl. She did not wait for him to address her; no sooner had Sir Israel disappeared than she arose and came over to the bench where he was sitting, holding her basket open as an excuse for addressing him.

"You are an American, sir?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

"I am—and you?"

"Oh, yes! and in trouble. I am not—not I am running away in this disguise, sir; but, indeed, I am not to blame for it. If my mother could know how I am situated!—oh, sir, as an American and a gentleman I appeal to you!"

"Be calm, my dear young lady, and tell me what you wish, as if I were your brother. Consider me as such; ask my assistance in any way; I shall be only too happy to serve you."

"Oh, if I could tell you all! I trust you, sir, for your face tells me that it is safe to do so. I hoped to reach the steamer and sail for New York, before my pursuers discovered me; but, alas, one of them is on this boat with me, and I am suffering all the horrors!"

"Hush," interrupted Redmond, in a whisper, "he is coming. No, my girl, I do not care to buy. I am no judge of lace."

The girl looked over her shoulder, at this hint, and there stood the grinning baronet, so close that his breath touched her cheek—so close that she shivered with terror as she saw the cold triumph, the gleam of malice, in his crafty black eyes.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SNAKE HOLDS AND TIGHTENS.

WHEN M. Goldenough turned away from the gaming-table where he had lost in twenty-four hours all that he had gained in four weeks of extraordinary good luck, and encountered Sir Israel at the door, with a question as to whether he knew where his daughter had gone, he found the baronet in an ill humor.

"Curse you and your daughter, too, monsieur; if you're going to play in this reckless manner, I'd better keep out of the family. You will ruin yourself, sooner or later, and then what will I get with my lady, but her good looks? She's deuced handsome; but one must look out for his interests, you know; for he can't expect another to look out for him. I'm ten fathoms deep in love with mademoiselle; but soft words butter no parsnips; what is her dot and how secured?"

M. Goldenough took Sir Israel's arm and hurried him away to a quiet spot on the promenade; then he faced his friend, and with a sullen smile, asked him, curtly:

"Did you ever chance to hear anything of the estates of the D'Eglantines, in Caen?"

"An immensely wealthy family," answered the baronet, smacking his lips at the very thought of estates far exceeding his own.

"Well, now, I will confide a fact to you. You can act on the knowledge of the fact as you think best. My daughter Violet has no expectations whatever from me; but, on her mother's side, she is the sole prospective heir to every acre of those estates, every dollar of their income. Her mother is a D'Eglantine, and now sole owner of all the property. Violet is her only child, and indisputable successor. Judge for yourself whether it be worth some trouble to secure for a wife a young lady with such prospects."

Sir Israel's eyes twinkled like sparks that have been stirred.

"Has mademoiselle returned to your hotel?" he asked, with sudden interest.

"That is what I am anxious to ascertain. Will you come along?"

The reader knows they did not find the victim of their schemes there.

In the pursuit which followed the baronet proved himself a perfect ferret.

The business seemed perfectly congenial to his peculiar talents.

Then, urged on as he was by the fear of losing an actress, the very prospect of whose flesh made him half delirious with joy, he was better than a dozen hired detectives. The poor child had small chance of hiding herself from such pursuit.

Before dark they were in the second-hand clothing-store, where the woman at first lied obstinately from fear of losing the beautiful garments over which she had been gloating; but when assured that she would remain unmolested by the law, and was offered a handful of silver besides, she soon described the costume which the young lady had adopted, and told how she had directed her to the railway station.

M. Goldenough felt so sure of soon overtaking the fugitive that he would make no use of the telegraph or officers of the law, preferring to conduct his family affairs less publicly. The two men had given chase; but the timid creature they pursued had some wit to elude them; she had doubled on her track, and finally taken to the steamer, after actually seeing her father and the baronet on the train, in a car of which she was sitting.

They had discovered their mistake too late to rectify it immediately; and had then resolved that M. Goldenough had better proceed to Bremerhaven and remain there on the lookout, as they had decided that she was making her way there, to sail for America. Meantime, the baronet, who had grown very uneasy over their mistake, undertook to overhaul the steamer at some landing-point of her passage, and keep his eye on mademoiselle until her father claimed her.

We have seen how well he succeeded. When first addressing the pretended lace-maker about her work, he was informing her of how delighted he was to have the opportunity of once more paying his respects to his fiancee and of the pleasure it would be to M. Goldenough to greet his daughter when she stepped from the boat.

"Monsieur Goldenough is not at all angry with your playful masquerading, mademoiselle; but it confirms him in his opinion that you will be safer with a husband than with a father; and he has promised to hand you over to my keeping before twelve o'clock to-morrow."

And Violet, feeling the toils tightening about her, was still conscious of one supreme resolution of her heart and soul—to die before permitting that creature to touch her hand. But how! She knew that it was not so easy to die on a wish. She must have the means at hand. Wistfully she looked at the blue water. If she should attempt to drown herself and be rescued, she knew very well that a marriage or a mad-

house would be her punishment. While thinking over the whole ground her desperate eyes had roved about in search of one kindly human being to whom it would seem tolerably safe to appeal. She saw Mr. Rhodes and recognized him as a fellow-countryman. Somehow, he seemed to inspire her with courage. Did some subtle, inexplicable influence from the mother who had so lately associated with him on board the Germania still linger about him, that Violet should so trust him at first glance and feel as if she had found a defender, who would believe her story and not swallow the fiction that she was mad, as soon as a wicked man chose to accuse her of it!

She would have told the stranger all; but the ever-watchful baronet, fearing that she might do something so rash as to throw herself over the side of the boat, had concluded to go dinnerless and returned home to thwart her attempt at confidence. Stealing softly on the bar he heard enough to convince him that mademoiselle was about to appeal to this gentleman, who was also an American, and he resolved that an opportunity should not again occur.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 330.)

RED ROSE.

A SONG.

BY GORDON CAMPBELL.

A red rose gleamed in the sun's glad ray; A gallant he plucked it and rode away.

"There's naught for the lady that I love best, But a rose for the one that's loveliest."

Two maidens as fair as fair can be, And one was loved, but which was she?

"A rose, my ladies," the page doth cry; "That's why the gallant came riding by."

"There's naught for the lady that he loves best, But a rose for the one that's loveliest."

Said one of the twain, "He thinks me fair;" So she set the rose in her golden hair.

Then said the other, "It fain must be; He thinks thee fair, but his love's for me."

But the knight that rode in his pride of might Won death as the prize of the well-fought fight;

And the maiden that chose the better part Won a red rose and a broken heart.

OLD DAN RACKBACK.

The Great Exterminator: THE TRIANGLE'S LAST TRAIL!

BY OLL COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "HAPPY HARRY," "IDAHO TOM," "DAKOTA DAN," "OLD HURRICANE," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXL—CONTINUED.

Then Dan turned, and with the mother's permission, lifted the baby from the basket and sat down before the fire. He held it as stiffly and awkwardly, and yet as tenderly in his arms as though it had been a mere bubble, liable to disappear at the rudest touch. A quaint, confused smile of delight mounted the old man's face, and it was plain to see that the touch of the child thrilled his whole frame with a feeling that he had seldom experienced. His features assumed a different expression. They were relieved of the care and suspense, the fear and anxiety so characteristic of the borderman. A radiance, childlike and gentle in its simplicity, beamed upon the tender infant. And the baby, relieved of its cramped position in the basket, seemed to regard the old man with unconscious delight. It was a meeting of the extremes—the old man, bowed down with age, and the child just from the hands of the Creator; and the contrast was such as to arrest the attention of those around, with a feeling serious enough.

The young rangers gathered around Dan, to look at the baby, whose influence in the cabin seemed like that of a charm. The change in his position, and the bright glow of the fire, relieved the child of its fretfulness, and with its big blue eyes watched the dancing shadows on the rude wall, kicked and crowded and flung its chubby fists as though it had never known a moment's pain.

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"Now, who be you, anyhow?"

"The boys, Dinah," answered Kit, and the two men stepped into the cabin, without waiting for an invitation.

The woman opened a dark-lantern, and flashed it into their faces.

"Oh, Lor' a' mercy! you're strangers here!" cried the fat wench before them, in accents of terror.

"We know it, but we want to lodge here to-night."

"You jis git out ob here, dat's what you do! If de ole massa comes and find you here, he jist raise ole Ned."

"We want something to eat and drink, Dinah," said Flea.

"Not a bite, not a drink shell you have!" she answered; "and fo' de Lord you'd better trampooze from dis bungalo."

"Where are the men folks?"

"Dat none ob your business, either."

"Well, we'll burn the house, hang you, and feed you to the wolves, if you don't tell us where you keep your prisoners—where the men put the young man they brought here an hour ago."

"Lor' sakes, how you talk! You're crazy as a bed-bug!"

The men exchanged smiles, for they saw that the wench was half drunk, while fumes of liquor pervaded the room. While Kit kept an eye on the negroess, Ichabod rumaged the house over and over, but could find nothing of the prisoner. He found, however, a jug of whisky, to which he and Kit seemingly helped themselves, and then passed it to the negroess.

The old woman's black face, which had hitherto been knit in anger and rage, now melted into a smile, and with a sleepy guffaw, she took the jug, lifted it to her mouth, and drank freely—smacking her lips with high gusto.

Kit and Ichabod next helped themselves to the pantry stores; ever and anon pretending to drink from the jug, and each time forcing the negroess to drink with them. This finally terminated in the old woman getting so drunk that she could scarcely stand. Dropping into a chair, she looked up with a drunken leer, and said:

"He's you-a self, (hic) ole Cricket's nice (hic) and drunk—don't keer a cent (hic) fo' anybody, so—

"Hang up de (hic) fiddle and de bow—"

"Dinah, can't you dance?" asked Flea.

"Go'ly, guess I can (hic)," and she staggered to her feet and began to dance, but reeling and tottering like the circular spinning of a top.

Ichabod whistled, and Kit Bandy laughed till he cried.

Suddenly the wench lost her balance and fell. She went down upon the puncheon floor like a log.

"Lor' heavens!" she exclaimed, looking around in a sort of bewilderment, "s'pose I broke through? Why (hic), I'd just went clair down to de bottom ob de pit (hic) on dat young priser."

"Ah, ha! we got it a'ready, Kit!" exclaimed Flea. "I thought about a little lubricating would do the nigger's tongue good, and make the secrets slip out of their own accord. Umph! hugh! a pit under the floor! We will look after that, Christopher Bandy."

They seated old Dinah in one corner, out of the way; then they took up the slabs that comprised the floor, and gazed down. To their surprise they beheld a yawning pit beneath. The rays of the light failed to reach its bottom. Kit, leaning over the edge of the abyss, called out:

"Tom! Idaho Tom?"

His own words came back in a hollow groan.

"He's dead, if he's there, else he's down at the antipodes," said Flea.

The men found a rope ladder rolled up and hung on a strong iron hook, driven into one of the "sleepers" of the floor. At once Kit took it from the hook, unrolled it on the floor, then carefully lowered one end into the pit, fastening the other on the hook. Then, all being ready for the descent, he hung the lantern on his arm, and slowly and cautiously descended the swaying, quivering ladder. As soon as he had disappeared with the light all was left in blinding darkness in the cabin. Ichabod Flea watched the descending light until it had dissolved into a kind of a twilight in the distant gloom, then with his revolver in his hand, he placed himself between the pit and door, to await the result of Kit's exploration.

Meanwhile, the old negress sat reeling in the corner, totally unconscious of what was going on.

Down into the depths of the abyss descended the fearless detective. The chasm appeared to be a natural one. Its sides were rough and irregular, and in diameter it varied from ten to twenty feet. Here and there, the sharp, jagged edge of a rock was thrust out like a wolf's fang, and here and there holes and fissures, in which a man might have concealed himself, indented the sides. In some of these "pockets" were boxes and bundles, which Kit had not a doubt contained stolen treasure of some kind. But he had not time to examine them, and with a glance at each, passed on. After the descent of fifty feet, he reached the bottom of the rift—a hard, smooth, stony floor.

Holding the lantern above his head, Kit glanced around him. The pit was quite spacious and the walls shelving—in other words resembling a long-necked funnel inverted. It would have been impossible for a person to have escaped from it without human aid; and yet after searching the pit through, he found nothing of Idaho Tom, as he had been led to expect he would from the old negress' unguarded remarks. He found a blanket or two, a robe of skins, and other evidences of the place having been recently occupied. But there was nothing to convince him that Tom had ever been an occupant of the dismal hole. He examined every inch of the environing walls as high as he could see, but no sign of an opening was visible. He began to speculate over the matter and a fear seized upon him when it suddenly occurred to him that the old Jezebel was only playing the part assigned her, and that he had been entrapped! This conviction forced itself upon his mind so forcibly that he became inwardly alarmed, and slipping the lantern over his arm, he began ascending the ladder rapidly.

He had made more than half the distance, when the voice of Ichabod Flea came down to him like the knell of death in warning notes.

"Good God, Kit!" he exclaimed, "the robbers are upon us!"

The old detective, almost paralyzed with these startling words, hung immovable upon the ladder. He was not long, however, in recovering his presence of mind, and at once began to consider the proper course to pursue. While thus pausing, a horrible scream was heard above, and the next moment a human body shot past him—tearing against the sharp edges of the rocks, rebounding from side to side—and then fell with a sudden thump on the bottom.

"Oh, God! they have tumbled Ichabod into the shaft!" thought Kit, as the sound of wild, wrangling voices came from above. "I must go back, or they will cut the rope and let me fall."

He was about to begin the descent, when a little white hand was thrust suddenly out from the rocky wall at his side, and touched his arm.

"Here! creep into this passage, Kit," the voice said.

Then the arm was withdrawn, and Kit turned his eyes in time to see a white, human face disappear in the darkness of the passage before him!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 324.)

A FAREWELL TO KEY WEST.

BY F. X. HALIFAX.

Farewell, my fair island;
Farewell to the breeze,
That blows from the ocean
And sings through the trees.

Farewell to thy beauties
Too many to name;
Forever and ever
Be the same!

My ship is all ready;
My boat's on the shore;
Farewell to my fair island,
Till we see you no more.

Miss Beryl's Ride.

BY HENRIETTA E. DE CONDE.

"The horse has one vice, Miss Beryl; he does not like ladies!"

The girl gave a scornful laugh and answered incredulously:

"You are an imaginative animal, Mr. Rossmore, and fancy the horse in complete sympathy with yourself!"

Yet, in spite of her scorn, Miss Beryl clenched her small hands and bit her hot lips until a sweet sickness of blood was on them, as she stood close under the hedge while Launcelot Rossmore rode away.

"He despises me!" she thought, and remembered how their first meeting had been down by the river-bottom where she in mad frolic was riding, without saddle or bridle—hatless and short-skirted—a wild little pony at pines of drift along the shore.

If even man had expressed by a look that odious epithet, "Tom-boy!" Launcelot Rossmore had expressed it upon that occasion, and ever since Miss Beryl had clothed herself in willfulness and asperities in his presence to cover the red rash occasioned by the nettle mortification.

Miss Beryl was angry enough to have cried this afternoon, because in her most soul she was tantalized with Rossmore's persistent refusal to loan her the beautiful animal he bestrode, as well as by that consciousness of his secret contempt under which she always labored; but the primroses were just blossoming, and as Miss Beryl stooped to gather some growing upon the bank whereon she knelt, a voice on the other side of the hedge arrested her attention:

"There ain't no good a-stoppin' 'ere, I tells ye—the chap'll be goin' soon—he just rid on is 'orse!"

"That's all right, Snoozer, but has he got the swag?"

"E' allus has it, hi seed 'im tap the till more nor once an' strap the paper aneath is coat! 'E's sure to ave 'fite; they pays on time in these ere mills!"

"All right is it, then; heave ahead!"

Miss Beryl never stirred, and scarcely breathed in her intensity of listening, but as the speakers moved with stealthy tread away over the grass she cautiously parted the hedge-brush and peeped through.

Tramps the speakers were, and with faces hardened and devilish; but in manufacturing districts such characters as these come and go without attracting much attention, and Miss Beryl gathered her primroses and went homeward through the fast-gathering twilight.

A great uneasiness pervaded the girl throughout the evening. At ten she had seemed brighter than ever to Launcelot Rossmore; but, somehow, when it was over and the young man gone, all the gay spirits seemed to desert her and in their place there came such tricksy, melancholy creatures of fancy that early she took her bedroom candle and left them all chatting in the moonlight to sleep off her *migraine*.

It might have been two hours, perhaps three that she slept, and then her eyes flew open, wide, as if sleep and they had never made acquaintance. The house was still as if all were dead, but through the window there came the shrill neigh of a horse, and Miss Beryl knew that Rossmore's faithful Warwick, too, was waking.

The little library was deserted and dark when she stole down stairs in the evening, but, as the swish of her garments broke through the stillness, Launcelot Rossmore stepped in at the window.

"You are ill!" he said, and placed her in an arm-chair close to the window, where the voiceful night-wind toyed sweetly with the overhanging eglantine, and the moonlight cast a yellow glory around her.

"How shall I thank you for last night's work, Miss Beryl?" he asked, when she was comfortably settled.

"By telling me how you caught the robbers?"

she answered, hastily, unwilling that he should approach to sentiment, and she with womanish tears so near to shedding.

But Launcelot Rossmore was every whit a man. No subterfuge should put him off when once he had determined upon anything, and unheeding her startled eyes, he said:

"You are the bravest woman in the world, Miss Beryl!"

"You mean that I rode Warwick?" she nervously commented.

Through a magnetism not to be resisted, Rossmore drew up to his hiding eyes, and no longer evading what she read there. Miss Beryl listened to a tale of contrition—of royal homage and awakening love, told as men tell those things who are deeply in earnest.

But Miss Beryl had pride. She would not so soon confess a love that had grown sweetly in the midst of resentment and mortification in her heart, and so she said to him:

"Wait! Patience and devotion are the strongest friends your sex have ever had at court!"

However, when the tiger-lilies rear up their gold-crowned heads from the meadow grasses, and the white birches clothe themselves in a phantasy of green, Miss Beryl will be Miss Beryl no longer, and Launcelot Rossmore will have taken unto himself a wife.

A Boston tailor has had his billheads stamped with a picture of a fidget-me-not. —*Whitfield Times*. This is all rights as long as customers have enemies.—*New Bedford Herald*. Yes, but those dandy lions are apt to like blazes.—*Boston Globe*. And then have the bills sent to their poppies too.—*Commercial Advertiser*. Well, a fellow has got to have jessamine of wealth to pay for clothes nowadays, they have been so n'e'erthins the war. It's silly for a man to croon he don't happen to owe his tailor.—*Sunday Courier*. Better dianthus make no sign than o've the tailor you canna pay.

How she put saddle and bridle upon the horse was the mystery of afterthought to her, but presently, she lit him out, trembling within her, lest at the last moment the animal should turn rebel and refuse to let her mount.

And some of us say and insist that there is no intelligence save in man, yet Warwick stood as if an onyx carving while the girl leaped to her seat, and, obedient to her voice, darted away toward the hill road as if of himself he knew the threatening danger and meant to do his part.

There was a bridle-path more wild and lonely than the cart-way, but a shorter cut to the mill on the hillside and into this Miss Beryl turned. A flock of young trees trooped up on either side, and with their leafy fingers beckoned her on, but the girl, with that feminine terror of shadows when there is danger abroad, looked neither to the right nor to the left, but only straight on up the hill path with agonized, affrighted longing.

Steeper and more steep grew the narrow pathway; denser and more drear the shadows; still, on they went, like phantom creatures of the night, the sure, swift hoofs of the horse striking no echoes from the grass-grown earth—the white lips of the girl making neither cry nor moan as the low tree-branches lashed her face and tore at her hair, and the brook beside which she rode seemed a voice of menace as it gurgled down the hill.

At last the clearing is reached—the slow, dull sob of the mill-wheel falls upon Miss Beryl's ear like the travail of a friend, and now the little brick office, dark and still—ah, deathly still—dawns upon her sight.

"I'se sure to be too late?" Softly she reins Warwick into the shadow of the white birches, and throws the bridle over a trimmed, stout post, then, crossing with flying feet the moonlit square, she jerked nervously at the latch of the office door.

She heard a sudden start—a noise of slipped feet upon the floor, and then a voice spoke out:

"Who is there?"

"Hush!" Miss Beryl whispered in an agony of apprehension. "Open the door quick; they may be already here and hidden somewhere in sight of me!"

The heavy door swung suddenly upon its hinge and the girl staggered blindly into the place.

"In the name of Heaven, what is the matter?" asked Launcelot Rossmore, with a sharpness of dread that sudden calamity had fallen upon them at the house in some incomprehensible way.

Miss Beryl's senses were becoming confused, but she realized that there must be an explanation made, and sunk down into a chair against which she had stumbled in the darkness, saying:

"In one moment, Mr. Rossmore, and please do not light your lamp!"

"What new freak of the hoyden was this?" thought Rossmore, as he dropped his half-burned match upon the floor.

But Miss Beryl had seen his face in the tiny sulphurous flame, and gathering all her forces, she told, in a steady voice, the story of the tramps, and of her ride through the night.

With eyes now grown accustomed to the darkness he could define her figure dimly in the chair as she spoke, and as the emotional, steady voice went on, he could have cursed himself for an arrogant boor for his contemptuous judgment of this brave young creature; but he only said:

"God bless you, Beryl!"—then, after a pause of thought, continued: "Let us go across to the engine-house and prepare a reception for these gentlemen."

Silently they crossed the little square in the shadow of the tall mill, and reaching the door, Miss Beryl whispered:

"I will wait here!" and Rossmore at once respecting a delicacy so newly recognized, passed in before her.

A moment the girl listened breathlessly, and then like a phantom that ports our eyes from light and then is gone, sped away under cover of the ghostly birches to where Warwick pawed the earth softly and tossed his handsome head in impatient waiting.

It was the work of an instant to mount, and after all seemed a troubled dream until she lay once more upon her bed, with the gray dawn creeping at the window, and a strange bewilderment of feelings, tender and resentful, toward the man for whose sake she had made that mad and lonely ride, eschewed her rest.

All that day following, Miss Beryl lay upon her pillows, weak, exhausted, and protected from all thoughts of living or of life by woman's specious plea of headache.

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But Miss Beryl had pride. She would not so soon confess a love that had grown sweetly in the midst of resentment and mortification in her heart

TO MY OLD TEACHER.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

It does not trouble me to see
Gray hairs about your crown.
You are the man who brought me up—
But then you took me down.
I owe you grudges by the score:
It seems to me to be a man
Since I have grown to be a man
The same I could pay.
You made me dive in nouns and verbs
Five days out of the week,
In hot times when I much preferred
To dive into the creek.
You were the tyrant emperor
Who ruled me with a rod;
Your scepter was a birchen switch
That made us scholars plod.
I served you with my bones
That proved my boyish soul;
Twenty rods could have been one,
On you I laid the whole.
You trounced me when I put an ex-
Tra letter in a word;
When I was prodigal with them
Your anger I incurred.
I thought you tried to bring out sense
What you were not at hand;
You always sent me far ahead
With many a kick behind.
It was no trouble, sir, for you
To keep me after school.
I thought you took delight to make
Me feel I was a fool.
I said when I grew far enough
Out of my boyhood's woes.
I'd leave you, sir, for you,
And figure up your nose!
I'd analyze your head with clubs,
And parse your neither ear;
And educate your upper lip.
And demonstrate your hair.
But stop, since I have come to think,
My hate shall turn to love;
You were my teacher seven years—
I've had revenge enough!

Love and Dietetics.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

AUNT MARJORY.

"Well, well, Herbert, I declare to goodness, if 'tain't you! And I laid flat on my back with the rheumatism. Come right here and shake hands with me. Massy takes alive! how you have grown, to be sure. Not enny taller, as I know on, but more manish-like—the image of your father the year before he died; only he never wore so much hair on his face. And so you're really at Dale Farm again? To think I should have got your letter, and was so beat to think you was a-comin', and hustled around to have things as I remembered you liked them, and then to go and git one o' my spells!"

"I'm awfully sorry to find you so poorly, aunt Marjory. I hope you do not suffer much pain?"

"Oh! you needn't mind me. As the girl said about the eels being skinned alive, I'm used to it. It's you;—only Hannah to take care of you."

"But I know that excellent handmaiden, of old. If I'm dependent upon Hannah's tender mercies, I shall get along nicely. Besides, I imagined I saw a veritable fairy hovering about the lower regions."

"La! bless you, no! She died seven years ago, while you was to that Dutch place, across the water."

"Hiedenberg."

"Yes, that's it, but you'd better run down to teet now. See that you get all the strawberries and cream you want, and plenty of new milk; and I made a batch of currant pies myself, and a bull crock full of those little plum cakes you used to like. Ask Hannah where everything is, and just make yourself at home and as contented as you can till I git round again."

"I'll try, auntie," Mr. Wellesley answered, dutifully, and went down to the dining-room—to luscious homemade bread and butter, preserves, pie, cakes, strawberries and cream, and Marion Dale. Probably Mr. Wellesley deeply regretted aunt Marjory's absence from the large, cheerful dining-room and her place at the head of the tempting flower-decked table. But he bore his grief with becoming fortitude, and a casual observer might have noted that he did justice to the supper, and seemingly enjoyed eating it *en tête-à-tête* with a graceful young hostess who made a bewitching picture where she's at back of the tall silver teaurn. Mr. Wellesley enjoyed the companionship of refined women and was a keen admirer of beauty. And Marion Dale, intellectually and physically, was a young lady quite fitted to be a pleasing companion, even to men of as cultured tastes as this handsome, silken-bearded, distant cousin of hers.

That Marion was gay and wild-spirited her frank, laughing self-introduction told Herbert as well as the merry dimples that came and went seductively in the ripe rich bloom of her cheeks, and the mischievous curves of her red bow-shaped mouth and gleams of her warm brown eyes. But, just as surely that she was well-read and classically-educated, her manners, tone and conversation betrayed. And so Herbert Wellesley enjoyed the artistic effect of his companion's transparent, pale-pink draperies with black velvet scattered here and there in dainty bows and contrasting with the firm, pearly flesh at rounded throat and waist; noted the dazzling beauty of her teeth; watched the dark clustering curls above her brow get prettily disordered by the gusts of clover-sweet air that wandered in through the deep porch and wide-opened door; smiled a little amused smile at Marion's coquettish way of drooping her long-fringed lids over her brilliant eyes; and was entirely contented that instead of spending his entire vacation at fashionable resorts he had come for a little to this favorite place of his boyhood.

Though, in the reader's opinion, it may sometimes detract from the admirable qualities of Mr. Wellesley and Miss Dale, it must be acknowledged that those young people, through the ten days that followed, did not exhibit any great amount of grief at aunt Marjory's continued inability to share their companionship. And while that good lady, herself, fretted and fumed in the room she was unable to leave, and bore with more equanimity the tortures of the rheumatism than her doubts of her pet nephew's ability to be contented at Dale Farm while she was incapacitated from doing its honors, the pet nephew, himself, with the exception of the times when he paid her demure and sympathetic calls, quite forgot that such a person as aunt Marjory existed and was wont to be the presiding genius of the old house, so well did Marion fill her place.

Indeed, Marion more than filled aunt Marjory's position as hostess. She accompanied

Herbert on all his troutting expeditions and could tell him just where the beauties hid cly. She drove with him in the afternoons and galloped over the New Hampshire roads with him in the twilight. If she helped Hannah by picking strawberries, or sat in the porch and hulled them, or shelled peas, Herbert watched her—smoking, and leaning against the garden fence, or played at helping her—sitting on the shady steps at her side eating the largest berries or reading Browning to the rhythm of the peas trickling into the pan. And through the fragrant evenings they talked late under the shadows of the honeysuckles or promenaded through the drifts of moonshine that lay under the maples.

But all this was only in accordance with aunt Marjory's daily morning command to Marion, to try and keep Herbert from feeling homesick. Though it is questionable whether that good woman would have approved of her injunctions being carried out so strictly as to comprehend a series of midnight partings between the young folks. Of these Marion did not make mention; and it is clear that she had suspicions that the usual rules of the staid household were being disregarded, nighly, she kept them to herself with the reflection that she had "been a young gal, once, herself."

It was during one of those delicious evenings, when all within the house was slumberous silence, and for miles over the hills and farmlands only Herbert and Marion were wakeful, that the two ceased from their promenade under the maples, and seating themselves side by side upon the lower step of the old stoop, dropped from gay repartee into that sympathetic quiet which is only possible between companions who have the feeling of fully understanding one another. The gentleman gazed at the stylish head and richly-tinted face near him, while their owner seemed lost in reverie. Marion was the first to speak. Turning, suddenly, the gleam of the rose-diamonds that formed a monogram on Herber's locket caught her eye and suggested her words.

"Do you know, cousin Herbert"—they had decided to claim their relationship—"that I have not asked, yet, to see the inside of your locket? Will you not reward such resistance of curiosity on the part of a woman by telling me whether there is a picture in it?"

"Yes; there is."

A long pause, broken by Marion's looking at her archly and saying:

"Well?"

"Well?" Herbert repeated, provokingly.

"I suppose it is impossible for you to imagine that I would like very much to see it?"

"Oh, no! not at all impossible to imagine such a thing. Still, I believe you have not expressed any such desire."

Another pause, during which Marion's lips shaped themselves into an unmistakable pout. Herbert drew out his watch and remarked, seriously:

"Really, Marion, I had no idea it was so late. I must bid you good-night."

As he extended his hand Marion exclaimed, with a charming mixture of authority and pleading:

"I do want to see the locket. Please show it to me!"

He detached the ornament, opened it, and placed it in her palm. The moonlight fell upon the tiny ivory type within, showing a dazzling pink and white face, tender blue eyes, and a tangle of yellow-fair hair.

"How lovely! She must be a dear friend."

Marion's lids drooped, slightly, and there was the least possible quiver about her red mouth, as she answered, gravely:

"You are not the kind of man who would carry about any ordinary woman's picture."

"Well," Herbert replied, watching Marion intently, "this is scarcely the picture of an ordinary woman. She was the greatest heiress and belle in town, last season."

Herbert was far too much of a gentleman to add that this charming woman cared for him, and had used every ladylike art to win his affections, and had, herself, gracefully placed her picture within his locket as a gage of her gratitude for some slight favor he had done her. And so Marion put her own construction upon his words, and as she held out her hand, said good-night with a seriousness quite new to her.

But Herbert detained the hand in his, and when Marion flashed a resentful glance toward him, she met a passionate revelation in the eyes bent ardently and questioningly on her glowing face. Almost in the same minute the girl had faced the possibilities of misery and happiness; but with the promise of the latter her mercurial spirits and latent coquetry beat high. And perhaps Marion never looked more enticingly handsome than at this moment when Herbert Wellesley drew her toward him, and looked down into her face, saying:

"Marion, do you know that my stay is almost up?"

"Not until Saturday?"

"Not until Saturday—two days more. That seems a very short time to me, and before I go I should like an answer to one question. Do you think you can love me enough to become my wife, some day, Marion?"

Marion's lids drooped, and she essayed to draw away her hand as she replied, with studied evasion:

"You can hardly expect me to answer such a question upon the instant and under these circumstances."

"To what circumstances do you refer, may I ask?"

Herbert's love-burdened tones and rich voice grew suddenly severe and monotonous. But Marion's perversity was only increased by this swiftly-changed manner of the man who was but momentarily her confessed lover. She answered, with pretty defiance, determined to know the history of that dazzling beauty who graced Herber's locket:

"To the picture you wear and your confession concerning it."

Mr. Wellesley dropped her hands and regarded her gravely.

"Marion, I will not be trifled with. That picture does not concern you in the least. Either you do or do not love me. And as my passion for you is not a matter for a coquette's amusement, I desire an instant answer to my question."

"Which I must beg leave to decline giving," retorted Marion, haughtily, her eyes burning like deep amber wine.

One long, surprised, pained glance from Herbert. "Is it possible you mean to send me away then, Marion?" he asked, with a forced quiet that made the girl's heart throb frighteningly. And when she only bowed he turned calmly to the shadows of the hall.

For a long time Marion stood in the mid-night moonlight thinking over the brief little drama, and repenting her folly. Now she knew fully the love she bore for Herbert and that his was a nature that had felt deeply the wounds of her assumed indifference. She told herself, however, that he would renew his suit on the morrow, and she would be honest with him. But her hopes and resolves brought no comfort, and long after she was safe in her

room she sat by the opened window, alternately condemning her own coquetry, and passionately railing at Herbert's coldness and pride as the cause of her misery. At last this self-communing grew unbearable. Her heart-conflict had resulted in a state of excited restlessness and a nervous headache. She longed for morning; but she knew that even if she desisted it would be impossible to sleep, and feeling dry and feverish, she softly opened her door and groped her way to the dining-room. Hannah's ways were quite familiar to her, so that she experienced no difficulty in finding the milk-room key and helping herself to a refreshing draught of the almost ice-cold drink. And then the light of the candle she held fell upon the snowy napkin that covered a plate of cake.

"Herbert's cakes," Marion said, to herself, softly, lifting up the corner of the damask and calling the rich little mounds beneath by the name that they had borne for years at Dale Farm. "I wonder what aunt Marjory would say to what has passed to-night? To-night, Oh, if it would but come morning! Of course we will speak again then!"

And so dreamingly, Marion helped herself to a couple of "Herbert's cakes," and stole back to her room. Seated again by her window, opposite the door, she consumed her delicious little lunch, and thought, thought, thought, tormentingly, until the dawn was stealing, ghost-like, up the sky. And then, suddenly, she became positive that slow, stealthy steps were approaching her door—upon which she fixed her gaze with fascinated horror. The steps came on, surely, and then, without warning, without the opening of the door, appeared first within the room a whiteness that slowly shaped the form of aunt Marjory, pale and wrathful, and on her one side the smiling, triumphant, dazzling face of the woman with the tender blue eyes, and on the other Herbert—grave and reproachful. Marion tried to put out her hands to them—to throw herself pleading at their feet, but she could only listen powerlessly to the soft fall of their retreating footsteps. Then the terrible agony of her conscious loss voiced itself in a shriek—loud and startling it seemed to her, bursting the bonds of the terrible numb sleep, only a low, strangled, startled cry it came to Herbert Wellesley, just stepping upon the roof of the porch, to swing himself down by the honeysuckle vines.

Herbert's window was the second from Marion's; but in an instant he stood by her casement, and the two looked into each other's eyes in the cool, passionless grayness of the morn.

"What is the matter?" he asked, low and swiftly, looking down into her flushed, frightened face.

"I—I believe I had the nightmare," stammered Marion, growing more confused. "I thought you had gone away."

"I am going now; that is, if you are quite yourself again."

"But I am not—I wish you would stay. What will aunt Marjory say?"

"It makes no difference what aunt Marjory would say, so long as Marion Dale has nothing to say."

"She has, Herbert. She loves you. And—"

"I am going now; that is, if you are quite yourself again."

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